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Patent Application

of

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for

METHOD AND DEVICE FOR THE PRODUCTION
OF FILLED AND SEALED CONTAINERS

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a method and device for the production of filled and sealed containers and a device for executing such method.

Background of the Invention

The previously known process of filling and sealing containers makes it possible to economically produce, fill, and seal containers, even under aseptic conditions. It is therefore widely used. In all cases in which the contents are sensitive to oxygen, it is however necessary to provide either the container with repackaging or to use glass containers. Both alternatives greatly increase production costs.

Summary of the Invention

An object of the present invention is to provide a process of filling and sealing containers which can also be used when the contents are sensitive to oxygen.

This object is achieved by a process in which the extruded tube is formed from at least one layer which makes the container impermeable to oxygen when the contents are sensitive to oxygen.

It is then not necessary to produce a blocking layer for oxygen by additional repackaging or using a glass container. If this layer is also able to meet other requirements required for the wall of the container, it is not necessary to provide coextrusion of at least two layers. In many cases, however, to meet the imposed requirements and/or for reasons of economy, it is advantageous to form the tube by coextrusion from two or more layers of materials with different properties.

With previously known machines for producing filled and sealed containers, only tubes which have a single layer can be extruded. Another object of the present invention is to provide a device which economically allows coextrusion.

This additional object is achieved by a device where the extrusion head and the pertinent extruder on the one hand and the blow-fill-seal means on the other hand are assigned to separate racks. Such assignment makes it possible to easily accommodate the increased number of components. Different extrusion units can then be combined with different blow-fill-seal means, enabling adaptation to different requirements without difficulty.

For purposes of the highest degree of flexibility, it is furthermore advantageous to make the control cabinet necessary for the power supply and control likewise as a separate unit. The separate unit can be set up in a location especially advantageous with respect to available space.

Other objects, advantages and salient features of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, which, taken in conjunction with the annexed drawings, discloses a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Referring to the drawings which form a part of this disclosure:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a container filling and sealing device according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a front elevational view of the device of FIG. 1; and
FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the device of FIG. 1.

Detailed Description of the Invention

A device for the production of filled and sealed containers, for example, ampules filled with a pharmaceutical preparation, according to an embodiment of the present invention, has a first rack 1 bearing the extruders 2, which can have a varied size, as shown in FIG. 3. In the exemplary embodiment, a larger extruder is between two smaller extruders. The extruders 2 are all at the height of the extrusion head 3 which, on its bottom, has an outlet opening for a tube. The extrusion head 3 is made such that coextrusion of three layers which jointly form the tube is possible. The tube head 3 is securely connected to the rack 1 by the extruders 2.

A second rack 4 is connected to that side of the frame or rack 1 above which the extruders 2 project. The rack 4 bears two blow-fill-seal means at a distance adjacent to each other, and both are made the same. Each of these two means has a blow mold divided in the vertical direction and positionable underneath the extrusion head 3.

After the tube emerging from the extrusion head 3 has reached a length such that its lower end extends to the lower end of the blow mold, the mold is closed. Instead of blowing the ampule or the ampules, filling and then sealing them in this position of the blow mold, as is conventional in the known devices, in the exemplary embodiment the tubing is cut off above the blow mold. The blow mold is moved from its position underneath the extruder head to a side position underneath the associated blowing and filling device 5. The two blowing and filling devices 5 are located, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, next to one side or the other of the extrusion head 3. At this point, the other blow mold is moved into the position underneath the extrusion head 3 at the same time in order to be able to accommodate an extruded tube there. Air for the blowing process is forced into the tube located in the other blow mold. This is followed by adding the contents through the still open head of the ampule or ampules. Only when filling is ended are the parts of the blow mold

which mold the head moved together and the head of the ampule or ampules is/are finish-molded and sealed. Correspondingly, after the other blow mold has been pushed back into its initial position, one or more ampules are blown from the tube located in it and they are then filled and sealed.

The contents of the ampules are protected both against moisture and also against oxygen, because one of the layers comprising the wall of the ampules prevents oxygen from diffusing through. The other two layers form a water vapor barrier. Therefore, the ampules, after they have been ejected and excess plastic parts have been removed, need not be provided with barrier-forming repackaging. The two conveyor means 6 with which the finished ampules are removed are shown schematically in FIG. 3.

The power supply of all assemblies takes place by a control cabinet 7 which also contains all the controls. The control cabinet 7 is a separate component which can be set up wherever this is most advantageous. In the exemplary embodiment, the control cabinet 7 is next to the first rack 1 connected to the back of the second rack 4.

All features mentioned in the above specification as well as those that can be taken only from the drawing are components of the present invention as further embodiments, even if they are not particularly emphasized and not specifically mentioned in the claims.

While one embodiment has been chosen to illustrate the invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is: